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Betty Curtis
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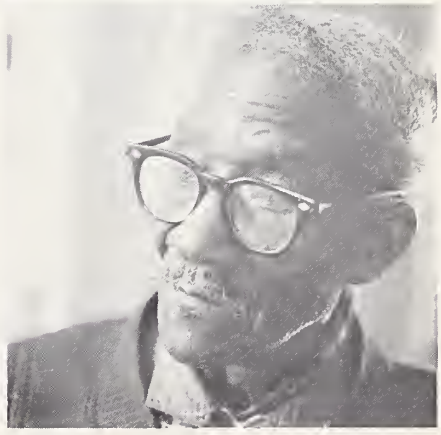

Special Issue on Child and Family Feeding Programs

JUNE 1969 VOL. 14, NO. 6

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In this issue special attention is being given to the problem of hunger in the United States and to the tools available from USDA to concerned citizens to combat it.

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HUNGER IS A PROBLEM

NOT SINCE THE DARK days of the Great Depression has so much national attention been focused on the social plight of underprivileged Americans. And with each ensuing day, the country becomes especially aware of the job that it faces to wipe out one of the hallmarks of poverty—hunger, and to improve the nutrition of its citizens.

President Nixon pointed to the new awareness when he spoke to U.S. Department of Agriculture employees. "I noted the tremendous interest," he said, "and I think it is encouraging that such an interest is finally developing among the people at large—the interest in the problem of hunger in the United States.

"You will recall when the public conscience finally became aroused, really aroused, about the problem of hunger in the United States. It was a CBS television program a few months ago in which millions of Americans for the first time, living in what is really the best fed, the best housed, the best clothed Nation in the world, millions of Americans saw on television that in this rich land there is hunger."

Although the exact dimensions of the problem have not been completely identified or documented, health and nutrition experts are researching the effects of hunger and malnutrition to provide some insight and knowledge about the job that lies ahead.

Dr. Arnold E. Shaefer, who is directing the National Nutrition Survey through the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, reported in January on some preliminary findings of the study, the first country-wide nutrition survey of its kind. Dr. Shaefer reported on the first segment of the 10-State study which included examinations of about 12,000 low-income individuals living in Texas, Louisiana, New York and Kentucky.

Dr. Shaefer said, "The preliminary data clearly indicate alarming prevalence of those characteristics that are associated with undernourished groups. Even though these findings come from a small sub-sample of the total National Nutrition Survey, it is unreasonable in an affluent society to discover such signs as those seen to date."

He continued by itemizing numerous health problems uncovered by the survey, such as retarded growth, cases of severe protein and caloric deficiencies, high instances of anemia, and low intake levels of vitamins A, C, and D, to name a few of the findings. And Dr. Shaefer concluded, "Our studies to date clearly indicate that there is malnutrition, and in our opinion, it occurs in an unexpectedly large proportion of our sample population."

Dr. D. M. Hegsted, chairman of the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences, said, "Obviously, we need some estimate of the magnitude of the nutrition problem. However, it is not very important to have an accurate figure showing that the number of people suffering from a nutritional deficiency is 5, 7 or 9 percent, of the population when a prevalence of 5 percent represents an intolerable situation. We may never be able to completely eliminate certain nutritional problems but we can decide that certain situations are simply not acceptable in this country. It is more important to find out where nutritional disease occurs and where the risk of disease is high than to derive broad estimates of the prevalence of the disease in a State or in the country."

Dr. Charles U. Lowe, chairman of the Committee on Nutrition of the American Academy of Pediatrics, reported on the effects of malnutri-

tion on the mental and physical development of infants and children.

He said, "It is our conviction that nutrition is the key to the normal development of infants and children. In effect, the quality and quantity of nutrition given during the first two to four years of life may have the effect of programming the individual for all the years of his life. Malnutrition during the last trimester of pregnancy and, certainly during the first months of life, may seriously compromise ultimate intellectual achievement. Experience in developing countries had indicated that the period of greatest nutritional risk is during the second to fifth year of life . . . The earlier malnutrition exists, the more devastatingly it impinges on growth and development.

"May I now call your attention to the interrelation between certain economic and medical realities. There are between five and seven million children in this country growing up in families considered to be living in poverty. The presence of poverty implies a family income insufficient to purchase many of the essentials of life. Unfortunately, food is one of the essentials which is unavailable.

"In families living in poverty there is a far higher rate of infant mortality than in more economically well-to-do families. In fact, a high infant mortality rate may be the hallmark of poverty in the U.S.A. In addition, the rate of premature births is also far higher, in some cases two and three times higher than it is in more well-to-do families.

"Finally, the prevalence of intellectual compromise and even mental deficiency may be from three to five times as frequent in children of families living in poverty.

"In effect, malnutrition, high infant mortality and prematurity rates and high levels of mental deficiency coexist as a constellation of abnormalities that are most frequent among our families living in poverty. In addition poverty appears to have a predilection for families with children and the presence of children within these families tends to perpetuate poverty by limiting the oc-

cupational options of the parents and educational opportunities of the children. One third of all families in the United States with four or more children live in poverty.

"It is not the poverty per se, which must be of concern . . . but rather, the fact that poverty carries with it a variety of social and economic disabilities. We have a sequence of aberrations, each of which feeds upon the others. This morbid chain must be broken. In my opinion the most readily accessible step is also the most critical. Were we to ensure that infants, children and pregnant mothers of this country receive adequate nutrition, we could interrupt the cycle and remodel the future. Infant mortality and prematurity rates would decrease. With this there would come to our children improved growth and development, certainly of body and probably of intellect. Educational accomplishment and achievement would improve and with this, economic status would rise."

In addition to infants and young children, other groups that seem particularly vulnerable to malnutrition are older men and women, and girls and women between 9 to 64 years old. Daniel A. Swope of USDA's Agricultural Research Service noted that these groups generally have "diets low in several nutrients."

For infants and children under 3 years, Swope said, referring to USDA's Food Consumption Survey of 1965-66, "Iron in the diets of this age group averaged about 50 percent under the recommended allowance."

Among older men and women, Swope added, "Women aged 65 and over had diets below the allowances for more nutrients than younger women."

Jessie S. Gertman, of the Administration on Aging in the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, gave a more detailed explanation of the nutritional problems of older citizens. "These later years of life," he said, "are characterized by: (1) economic changes

resulting from retirement and greatly reduced income; (2) physiological changes such as loss of teeth, diminished sensitivity of taste and smell, and decreased physical activity and metabolism; (3) social changes such as altered living patterns, routine, and family composition; and/or (4) psychological changes resulting from loneliness and anxiety. These changes may interfere with buying and preparing food and consuming a balanced diet. Other obstacles to optimal nutritional status among the aged are faulty eating habits of many years' duration and lack of knowledge and information on nutrition."

In addition to the sociological, psychological, economic and educational aspects of the malnutrition problem, there are other major considerations as cited by Howard P. Davis, deputy administrator of the Consumer and Marketing Service of USDA:

"Despite the progress made," he said, "many needs remain and the problems of meeting these are great. Perhaps the greatest problem is motivating and securing support from local communities to eliminate malnutrition. This is where Federal, State, local, and voluntary resources must help by providing homemakers with information on nutrition, food buying, and preparation and serving of nutritious meals. Just making the programs available to those who need help is a big problem. After years of prodding, cajoling and pressure, nearly 450 counties and independent cities still have no family food assistance available."

Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin, taking note of these comments, stated his views on the problem: "While there is much to learn about the extent of malnutrition in America, we know enough to feel convinced that this is a problem of immense urgency. It is unthinkable that hunger, protein deficiencies, and other forms of malnutrition should be permitted to stunt the physical and mental development of people in this land of abundance. We must wipe out malnutrition in America." □

TOOLS TO FIGHT MALNUTRITION

FEDERAL LEGISLATION already contains the basic tools to get food to people who are too poor, too young, too old, or too handicapped to provide fully for themselves. With these tools, the Nation can provide:

- food or food stamps to low-income families at home;
- selected highly nutritious foods to needy pregnant women, new mothers, and infants and children up to six years of age, to supplement any other food resources they have;
- breakfast and lunch in elementary and secondary public and private non-profit schools;
- meals to pre-school children in day-care centers and similar organized away-from-home activities;
- meals to pre-school and school-age children in summer recreation and day-camp programs.

These tools—with a little sharpening here and there—need to be wielded by enough people backed by enough of the Nation's resources if hunger and malnutrition are to be eliminated in the United States.

All of the hunger-fighting programs operate through established Federal-State-local channels. To make them effective, the maximum work must be at the local end where the people are who need help.

The programs, administered nationally by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service, fall into two broad categories.

(1) Family or "household" assistance to get more food to needy children and adults on their own table.

(2) Food service programs to provide meals to children in organized group activities such as schools, child-care centers, recreation programs, and so on. Needy children and adults in charitable institutions also benefit from USDA-donated foods given to hospitals, orphanages, and homes for the aged.

Family Programs

The oldest family food assistance program is generally called the "commodity program," begun during the depression of the 1930's. But the modern *family food donation program* is a significant tool for getting better nutrition to poor people, and is vastly different in 1969 than the surplus food giveaway of earlier years.

The variety of today's donated foods bought by USDA with an eye on nutritional content can supply most of the nutrients people need for balanced diets. Some 22 foods, including canned meats, poultry, fruit juices, canned vegetables, grain products and dairy products, are available to the States, which supply the foods to local communities where they are given to low-income families.

Further sharpening of this tool at the local level would insure that individuals have access to *all* of the foods. Lack of storage space and limited distribution facilities in many States and counties mean that too many families are unable to get the complete range of foods that the Federal Government buys. More—and more conveniently located—distribution centers would help elderly

people and large families who now must bring home and store up to 36 pounds of food per person per month.

The newer *Food Stamp Program* expands the low-income family's food dollars, and makes available to recipients the full variety of domestically produced foods at their nearest grocery store. Depending upon their income and number of people in the household, families swap a specified amount of their cash for Federal food coupons, popularly called "food stamps." In return, they get a total value in food stamps worth much more than they paid.

Some of the obvious handicaps of the food donation program—varied distribution, practical limits on variety, storage, and large volumes of food to be juggled by recipients—are eliminated by the food stamp method. Stamp users can shop as frequently as suits their needs, getting their food from the same commercial marketing system that everyone does.

But this hunger-fighting tool needs some sharpening, too. There is evidence that many families must pay too much of their own money to get stamps. In rural areas, particularly, one or two stamp issuance points in a county may impose transportation hardships on poor people, and issuance by mail and by mobile units is being increasingly used.

Again, further improvements in any of the food assistance programs can come about only through national and local commitment of more resources and manpower to carry them out.

The newest tool to help families is a health-oriented plan to get extra nourishing food to expectant mothers, infants, and youngsters up to six years of age. Operated through the free or low-cost clinics and health units that treat low-income women and children, the *supplemental food program* makes possible extra allotments of such foods as evaporated milk, baby cereal, fruit juices, protein items, and vegetables when the doctor or other health-unit staff member authorizes them for patients in danger of or suffering from malnutrition. The foods are given fre

to these needy mothers and children, regardless of whether the family lives in a food stamp county or one that distributes donated foods.

Child Nutrition

Oldest and foremost in the child nutrition field is the *National School Lunch Program.*

In the 23 years since the first school lunch legislation, the cash, foods and technical advice provided by USDA through State education departments have helped develop school food services in communities across the land. The experience and mechanics that grew out of this program pointed the direction for the broader tools that have been forged more recently to improve the nutrition of children.

The lunch program itself now enables nearly 74,000 schools to serve nutritious, low-cost lunches to as many as 20 million children in every State, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands. Most youngsters pay about half the actual cost of their lunch. Some 13 percent of the 3.2 billion lunches served last year were free, or reduced in price, to children unable to pay the regular charge. This school year, due to increased funding, the program is reaching even more of the Nation's less fortunate children.

Extra cash assistance above the regular cash donations for the National School Lunch Program has been available since fiscal year 1966 to help schools in low-income areas provide food service for needy children. Last year these earmarked funds helped over 184,000 children in nearly 800 rural and urban schools get over 47 million nourishing lunches, for as little as 10 to 15 cents regular price and at no cost to the needy.

In many schools where children arrive without breakfast, a three-year-old program helps youngsters get nutritious breakfasts with USDA food and cash assistance. This school year the *School Breakfast Program* is reaching some 212,000 children in about 2,300 schools. Nourishing breakfasts based on USDA nutrition standards include fruit or juice, milk, bread or cereal, with eggs or meat served as often as possible. They are usually priced at 10 to 15 cents, with needy children served free.

Settlement houses, day-care centers and recreation centers can now get Federal help for food services to children from low-income neighborhoods, and those with a great number of working mothers. The three-year pilot program is to help preschool children in need of better food, and needy school-age children who can be reached through summer recreation activities when school lunchrooms are closed.

Federal donations of food and cash will help pay for breakfast, lunch, dinner and between-meal supplements. Child-care centers can also get financial help to buy or rent equipment to begin or expand a food service operation. Congress authorized the *Special Food Service Program for Children* in a 1968 amendment to the National School Lunch Act.

The *Special Milk Program* encourages children to drink more milk by paying schools and child-care organizations for part of the cost of the milk they serve. Schools, child-care centers, summer camps, and orphanages serve milk under this program at reduced cost, and free where needed. This program is especially helpful in situations where there is no regular food service.

To broaden the reach of the nutrition programs for children, limited Federal funds are also available to help needy-area schools buy equipment to begin or expand their food services. And States are getting Federal financial help to pay some of the added administrative costs resulting from the new and expanding programs.

These, then, are the basic tools to get more food to more people who need it.

There is one more device, however, without which no amount of work and resources can bring an end to malnutrition—education. All of the food assistance programs of USDA are accompanied by education to tell and show people of all ages the why's and how's of nutrition. □

A Federal Food Help Directory

FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE from Federal agencies other than the U.S. Department of Agriculture for some food assistance. Your community may have access to one or more of these programs.

Emergency Food and Medical Services are administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity. This program provides grants to make available basic foods and medical services to control conditions of starvation or malnutrition among the poor. The funds can be used in several ways: to develop a food program in counties without existing programs; to supplement or expand an existing program; to extend the services of a program, such as providing transportation to distribution centers or increasing outreach services; to improve food assistance methods; or to develop a program of consumer and nutrition education. For information contact the Office of Economic Opportunity regional office or the Health Service Office, Community Action Program, OEO, 1111 18th St., NW., Washington, D. C. 20506.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act administered by the Office of Education of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare provides Federal financial assistance to schools with under-achieving children from low-income families. There are some 20,000 projects in operation in 16,400 of the 18,000 school districts. The funds can be used for any project, such as hiring teachers, buying equipment, or food and health services. About 1,700,000 children receive free snacks, breakfasts, and lunches through Title I. For information contact the Title I coordinator of your State department of education.

The Head Start Program provides funds to improve the health and physical ability of poor children and involve their families in the development so they may begin school careers on more equal terms with others more fortunate. Funds can be used for a program of snacks and lunches. Any community action agency funded by the Economic Opportunity Act or a local organization delegated by a community action agency may apply for funds. For more information contact the local community action agency, the OEO regional office, or the State economic opportunity office.

Under *Title IV of the Older Americans Act,* administered by the Administration on Aging of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, research grants are available to States to help communities devise new approaches to the delivery of services to older people. In 1968 a food and nutrition program to attack the social problems underlying the inadequate diets among older people was begun. Since that time, 29 grants for over $2 million have been made. Most projects comprise a meal served in a social setting, a food and nutrition educational program, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of service and cost. For more information contact the Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C. 20201. □

GETTING A PROGRAM STARTED

As a concerned citizen, you might be interested in how *you* can bring food help to your community.

If you want to take an active part in improving food and nutrition, you will need to become informed. Find out which U.S. Department of Agriculture food programs, if any, are operating in your community. Learn about nutrition problems in your area. Then set priorities and direct your efforts toward specific, immediate food needs.

You can help your local officials get more information on the Federal food programs and how they operate within your State. Although the exact names of the agencies and officials administering food programs vary somewhat among areas of the country, the suggestions on the chart on this page will help you reach the right contacts at Federal, State and local levels.

Once you have the facts on the Federal and State help available to start food programs, you and the community officials should determine what resources are available at home to make the programs go. If your resources are limited and the need is great, look into the additional Federal and State help available for low-income areas and neighborhoods. Your area may be able to get extra help even if part of your city or county is made up of middle and high-income families. A directory of Federal help is on page 10 of this issue.

Local Responsibilities

Here are some of the local responsibilities to consider in planning a food program. The stars show where extra help from USDA is possible for low-income neighborhoods.

For school lunch, breakfast, milk,

PROGRAM	LOCAL CONTACTS	STATE CONTACTS	FEDERAL CONTACTS
National School Lunch, Milk and School Breakfast Programs.	Director of school food services. School principal. School lunchroom manager. Members of the school board. Superintendent of schools.	Director of school food services, State department of education. State superintendent of education.	School Lunch Division, Consumer and Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.
Special Child Food Service Program for pre-school centers and summer recreation programs.	The board of directors of the pre-school or day care center. Director of public welfare. Director of school food services. Director of summer recreation program.	Director of school food services, State department of education.	School Lunch Division, Consumer and Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.
Food Stamp Program.	Director of public welfare.	State department of public welfare.	Food Stamp Division, Consumer and Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.
Family Food Donation Program.	Director of public welfare.	In most States the official in charge of donated foods can be reached through welfare or education departments.	Commodity Distribution Division, Consumer and Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.
Supplemental Food Program for mothers and young children.	Director of public health.	Director of public health. State official in charge of distributing donated foods.	Commodity Distribution Division, Consumer and Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

and food service for pre-school programs, you will need the following:

- Someone to plan, prepare and serve the meals.
- ★ Free or reduced price lunches for needy children.
- ★ Kitchen facilities.
- ★ Some food costs over and above those covered by normal rates of Federal food and cash donations.

For the donated foods program, local responsibilities include:

- Facilities to store and distribute the donated foods.
- People to give out the foods.
- Arrangements through the welfare department to accept applications and verify the need of families who apply for donated foods.

The Food Stamp Program requires at the local level:

- Arrangements through the welfare department to accept applications and verify the need of families applying for food stamps.
- Storage and issuance of the stamps to eligible families under the same security required to handle money.
- An account for recipients' cash payments.

The Supplemental Food Program requires:

- Public health officials to identify young families in need of better food and to write out the orders for supplemental foods.
- Facilities to store and distribute the supplemental foods.

Community Help

Local civic and voluntary organizations can make all the difference in the success of your efforts to build effective food programs.

As you launch your campaign to begin or expand food programs, work to build interest and support from local community groups such as fraternal and business organizations, the PTA, churches. Ask them to discuss the need for school and family food programs at their meetings. Keep them informed of your progress in talking with State and local officials.

Ask these organizations to consider taking an active part in bringing new or expanded food programs to your community.

In many school districts, after extra food and cash aid had been obtained from USDA, local businesses, clubs and churches contributed funds and equipment that made it possible to begin school feeding. In some areas community organizations sponsor free lunches for needy children, helping to ease the financial burdens of the local school lunch program.

Many day-care centers for preschool children are operated by churches and other voluntary service organizations. Make sure they know about the possibilities of improving food service for their children through the USDA's new Special Food Service Program for Children. With enough community support they may be able to enlist volunteer help to prepare meals for the center, or get contributions to buy needed kitchen equipment.

With this program, it is not mandatory that the meals be prepared in the day care center. The centers can use a caterer and still get the cash reimbursement, as long as the meals meet the nutritional standards set by USDA.

For the family food programs—either food stamp or donated foods—civic and voluntary community organizations in many parts of the country are taking a lead in helping.

Some of the services they perform are:

- providing transportation to help low-income families apply for and get donated foods or food stamps.
- organizing educational programs to help the families make best use of their food help.
- spreading the word to low-income families about how to get food help.
- helping equip and staffing the food distribution center where public funds are short.
- providing a local fund to help finance food education classes and emergency help to destitute families. □

PEOPLE HITTING HARD AT HUNGER

A COMMUNITY EFFORT

A community can care and help feed the low-income, as the Windham Area Community Action Program in northeastern Connecticut clearly shows. Nearly two years ago concerned citizens of the 16 towns that comprise the Windham area started feeding the area's hungry with donated foods from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Everything needed for this endeavor was supplied from willing volunteers within the community. A charitable organization donated office space for the food director. A private citizen gave centrally located freezer and storage space. Churches and private organizations made 19 convenient location centers available. And each one of the 16 towns paid a pro rata cash share to WACAP toward the purchase of a second hand truck to deliver the food.

As a result, there are 3,034 food donation recipients in the Windham area who never have to go hungry. □

MILDRED BROOKS

The best consumer education for the needy is the goal of Mildred Brooks, a home economics consultant who has been working for the Welfare Department in the Nation's capital for 14 years. She and three other home economists in the District of Columbia believe availability of food stamps is only a beginning to the end of the hunger problem. Washington has had the Food Stamp Program since July 1965.

Consumer education programs that deal with every aspect of daily living, and particularly with good nutrition, interest these home economists the most. One of the attempts at reaching their goal is an informal discussion program on such consumer subjects as buying and storing food, nutrition, and menu planning for families. These discussions take place in the welfare office waiting room where food stamp applicants come. In this room the applicants are shown film strips on good nutrition and food economy.

Prepared materials for distribution to the low-income are also good nutrition aids the women use. One of these is the monthly leaflet, "Betty Budget," which has food buying and nutrition tips. Another is a weekly leaflet on "Best Buys." This contains foods and prices taken from the newspaper just before the weekend. Here nutrition education is subtly worked in by placing the foods into the four basic food groups. □

MARGUERITE O. TOLLEFSON

Marguerite O. Tollefson is a professional who has been successful in educating the needy through the use of volunteers. She is a home agent of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Extension Service. In Montgomery County, Md., where there are over 7,000 families with incomes less than $4,000 a year, Mrs. Tollefson has set up an effective educational program.

Mrs. Tollefson and her women volunteers conduct classes that are of practical value to mothers of young children. In these classes good nutrition particularly is emphasized.

The volunteers also give information on USDA's Food Stamp Program, which has been operating in Montgomery County since last March. The volunteers tell the young mothers what food stamps are, who is eligible to receive them, and where they can buy them so that they can give their families more and better food. In many instances, they take the mothers to apply for food stamps.

The volunteers do everything possible to encourage the low-income women to attend the classes. They provide transportation, nursery care, and free lunches for all. □

SOPHIE LEAVITT

A volunteer who has been of great help to low-income women is Sophie Leavitt. She has been working with the Commodity Distribution Program in Palm Beach, Fla., and in Pennsylvania for 5 years.

Two years ago, Mrs. Leavitt came to Washington, D.C., to tape radio messages on low-cost recipes for families who are receiving food help, both donated foods and food stamps. Her radio talks on food told what and how to buy, how to prepare, and how to stretch the food budget. The tapes were made into two records for public service broadcasts throughout the country, one for broadcast in areas with the Food Stamp Program and the other for use in areas with the Family Food Donation Program.

Most recently, Mrs. Leavitt is running a weekly program for families receiving donated foods at a Riviera Beach, Fla., neighborhood center. Here the families demonstrate ways they use the donated foods, and exchange ideas. The programs are built around the questions and ideas that recipients bring in about the donated foods. One session for about 50 people featured the preparation and serving of split pea soup, prune-filled coffee cake, and scrambled eggs.

Sophie Leavitt has made detailed outlines and reports of these programs, which can be useful to other community people. □

LUCILE ARVIN

You don't have to be a food specialist to help people improve their nutrition habits. A case in point is Mrs. Lucile Arvin, certification clerk for the food donation program in Glades County, Fla. Glades County has been receiving donated foods from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service since last summer.

Mrs. Arvin's official duties included visiting homes to verify the need of persons taking part in the food program. She soon found that many needed help in learning how to use the foods to improve their family's diets.

She extended her official duties by giving the needy women copies of simple recipes that use USDA foods. She encouraged each person taking part in the food program to try these recipes. She also urged the families to spend what they can on fresh fruits, vegetables, and meat to help round out their diets.

Mrs. Arvin then decided to get some training from an extension home economist for herself and some of the recipients so that she could be of even more help to low-income families. She learned enough to be able to conduct her own food demonstration early this year at a county agricultural center in Moore Haven, Fla. At this demonstration she emphasized with simple dishes the variety of meals that can be prepared with USDA donated foods.

The people Mrs. Arvin is helping in Glades County are the unemployed and low-income families, migrant workers and families that are receiving social security benefits or grants under public assistance. They are all enjoying better diets because of her insight and understanding of their needs. □

B. P. TAYLOR

Because a school superintendent is concerned about the food his students are eating as well as the education they are receiving, students in San Diego, Texas, are well fed and more willing to learn.

Back in 1960, Superintendent of Schools B. P. Taylor tried to help his hungry students by giving them one vitamin pill a day. But he soon discovered that pills don't fill empty stomachs and he started feeding lunches to students under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program. Taylor believed so much in this program that he and his teachers went into the children's homes to tell their parents the merits of school lunch feeding.

In 1964, the San Diego lunch program was expanded to feed all students, including those who are unable to pay. Taylor and his staff do not discriminate against the poor students in any way. These pupils receive the same lunches as the paying children and never have to worry about being identified.

The schools in San Diego now participate in the school breakfast feeding program too. And everyone, students and teachers alike, finds school much more attractive knowing they'll be fed good, nutritious breakfasts and lunches. □

EDUCATION BATTLES MALNUTRITION

THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and land grant colleges is making a large-scale expansion of its educational program on food and nutrition. The expansion is designed to serve 200,000 additional low-income families who need to know more about nutrition, food shopping, and where to get food help. One characteristic of the educational program on nutrition is the people-to-people approach.

Extension has hired about 5,000 nonprofessional nutrition aides for the expansion. The program is financed from Section 32 funds, which traditionally have been used to support USDA's child and family feeding programs administered by local and State governments in cooperation with USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service.

The nutrition aides work in every State, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The 588 areas of work selected for the project were chosen because of the high percentage of people living in poverty.

The objectives of the expanded program on nutrition are:

- to help homemakers understand the basic nutritional requirements for their families;
- to help families learn to use their private resources to supplement the donated foods they receive and further improve their diets;
- and to help them learn to shop to get the most for their limited food budgets, which may or may not include food stamps.

Work to achieve these objectives may involve making non-participating families who are eligible to receive donated foods or buy food stamps aware of their eligibility and helping families make the necessary arrangements to participate.

About 600 local extension home economists will devote their time to hiring, training, and supervising the army of nonprofessional aides. The trainees undergo a concentrated instruction period on food and nutrition and other types of services, and some non-food related training that comes in handy when dealing with their low-income clients.

The techniques used in training the aides have been developed through pilot projects operated over the last five years in both urban and rural environments.

These pilot projects foreshadow success for the people-to-people method of education. The nutrition aides come from the community where they work; they know the people; they know the problems and attitudes; they are neighbors to their clientele and are not viewed with the apprehension that a complete outsider might arouse.

Although the practice of using nonprofessional aides in an educational project was started just recently, the concept is not new. Last year about 6,000 volunteers, mostly from extension homemaker clubs, gave up their free time to work with low-income people to better their knowledge of food and nutrition. Hiring nonprofessionals who could otherwise not afford volunteer time increases the impact and scope of nutrition education efforts.

Much enthusiasm has been generated for expansion of extension's nutrition education project. However, most people are aware that the surface of the problem of malnutrition in the United States has merely been scratched. □

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